**Course Title**
CURE 2225 Introduction to Indian Religions  
First Term: 2019  
Lecture and Tutorial: Thursday – 10.30am – 1.15pm  
Venue: ERB Rm 712  
Lecturer: Steven Matthews (Chandra)  
chandra08@hotmail.com  
TA:

**Course Description**
This course gives a broad introduction to the religions that originate in India - Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. These traditions are sometimes collectively referred to as ‘Dharmic Religions’ due to the similarities found between them. The course will focus upon Hinduism, whilst also exploring the other traditions and their relationship with Hinduism in the historical, philosophical, cultural, social and religious contexts. Islam, although not originating in India, played an important role in its religious, cultural and political history and development, and will therefore be explored in that context. The arrival of the British and their bringing of Christianity to India will also be discussed, as it too had a profound impact upon India and its cultural and religious development.

Topics to be covered include the origins of the four religions originating in India, and their historical development, particularly in the context of the Vedic tradition, from which Hinduism is said to originate. Concepts of the Supreme, sacred texts, reincarnation, the Yoga system, the Caste system and the numerous gods and goddesses found in Hinduism are some of the topics which will be covered. The relationships among the Dharmic religions themselves, and with Islam, British colonial rule, Christianity and modernity will also be explored.

**Learning Outcomes**

**Knowledge Outcomes**

(1) To be able to understand Indian religions in their historical settings and contemporary contexts.  
(2) To be able to understand the diversity and complexity of Indian
religions.
(3) To be able to engage in a critical analysis of these religions by the methods of the humanities and social sciences.
(4) To have basic knowledge of the central themes and issues of the Indian subcontinent, especially with respect to the cultural and religious dimensions.

Skills Outcomes
(1) Communication and presentational (oral and written) skill.
(2) Ability to gather, organize, deploy, synthesize and evaluate different types of evidence and information.
(3) Language skill: proficiency in reading and writing with accurate referencing and clarity of expression.
(4) Skills in cross-cultural understanding and intercultural literacy.

Attitude Outcomes
(1) Awareness of the plurality within religious traditions, the multi-faceted complexity of religions and of the issues of multiple and conflicting interpretations of symbols, texts and traditions.
(2) Recognition of the contested and provisional nature of knowledge and understanding.
(3) Tolerance of diverse positions and respect for other’s views.
(4) An ability to have a critical, yet sympathetic understanding and appreciation of religious traditions, particularly those to which one does not belong.

Class Schedule
I. Lectures
(1) Sept 5th Introduction to India and its Religions.
(2) Sept 12th Hinduism: Origins & History from Vedic times to the 21st Century
(3) Sept 19th  Hindu Sacred Texts: Vedas, Upanisads, Puranas, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavad-Gita
(4) Sept 26th  PurusarthaS (4 human goals), Hindu social system vs Hindu Caste system.
(5) Oct 10th  Workshop – Good essay writing & referencing
(6) Oct 17th  Gods, goddesses, and concepts of the Supreme
(7) Oct 24th  Soul/atma, reincarnation & karma.
(8) Oct 31st  Buddhism and Jainism
(9) Nov 7th  Bhakti Movement, its nature and development; Sikhism, its origins, development and present.
10 Nov 14th  Islam, its conquest of India and its interactions with India and its religions.
(12) Nov 28th  Indian Religions in the 21st Century

Note: Tutorials will be held after the lectures.

Assessments
There will be two writing assignments
1st essay 1500-2000 words = 30%
2nd essay 2000-2500 words = 40%
on a chosen topic from the course outline. The deadline for the 1st writing assignment is Oct 21st, the 2nd writing assignment, Dec 2nd.
Group presentations on a chosen topic from the course outline = 20%
Written English ability = 10%
**Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/).

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students’ uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

Students must submit their papers via VeriGuide [http://veriguide1.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/portal/page/index.jsp](http://veriguide1.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/portal/page/index.jsp) and hand in a print out of receipt and a signed Academic Honesty Declaration Statement.

**Feedback for evaluation**

An end-of-term faculty wide course evaluation will be conducted in class. Students’ comments and feedback on the course through the Discussion Forum within Blackboard or personal meeting with instructor and/ or research assistant are always welcomed.

**Reading References:**


